

Stenoptilia graphodactyla, a species of Alucitid new to the British fauna.

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I have quite recently bred from marsh gentian (*Gentiana pneumonanthe*) a few imagines of a plume which appear to me to be different from *Adkinia zophodactylus*, to which, of our British species, it seemed to be most closely allied, and which I now learn from Mr. Tutt is *Stenoptilia graphodactyla*, and near to var. *pneumonanthes*, Schleich. The credit of the discovery of the species, whatever it may be, is due to my wife. She collects plants, and, among a number of specimens she was drying, that had been obtained near Wimborne, was a head of marsh gentian containing several flowers. After they had been pressing for several days, under a considerable weight, she examined them to see if they required placing between dry sheets, and was not best pleased to discover that some of the flowers had been much eaten by a couple of little larvæ, which looked none the worse for having been subjected to such pressure. She brought them to me as she thought they might be something good, as they were feeding upon rather an uncommon plant, and I at once saw they were the larvæ of some kind of plume. I consulted the only book I had with me, Leech's *British Pyralides*, but could find no gentian-feeder, but thought the larvæ might possibly be that of *Adkinia zophodactylus*, which feeds on *Erythraea*, an allied plant. This was about the middle of August, and these two larvæ were then nearly full-grown. I placed them in a large glass-topped box with some flowers of gentian, into which they crawled, but in a day or two they came out, spun pads of silk on the glass, and, in about 48 hours changed to pupæ, hanging head downwards. The first moth appeared on August 29th, and the second on the 31st, and I noticed that they were not a bit like the figure of *A. zophodactylus* in Leech's book. These larvæ appeared to be rare, for, after several days' careful search among the gentian, which itself was by no means plentiful, I could only find about a dozen, and two or three more were found among the drying plants. On September 1st I netted one of the perfect insects, and on the 4th two more, which were beaten from mixed herbage in the locality where the gentian occurred. On this latter date I also took three pale brown plumes, much the worse for wear, which I thought might be *A. zophodactylus*, but proved to be *A. bipunctidactyla*. The following description of the larva was taken on August 25th:—

"Pale green, with a darker green dorsal line, below which is another dark subdorsal line, bordered on each side by a pale greenish-white line, the lower edge of which is rather indented; spiracles minute, white, in a black ring; the anal segments somewhat attenuated; the 2nd segment much smaller than the others; head pale yellowish-brown, clouded with darker reticulations; the whole surface covered with a pile of short pale brownish hairs, with longer ones in groups of two, three, or four, arranged along the sides and back. In some larvæ the dorsal stripe is tinged with purple, and the general colour a yellowish-green. Pupæ greenish-yellow."

I may add that there was no *Erythraea* growing where these plume larvæ were taken. The last moth was bred on September 20th.